

PRELUDE TO TRAGEDY,
SEPTEMBER 1846—NOVEMBER 1847

The Whitmans began their tenth year of residence at Waiilatpu in the fall of 1846 under favorable circumstances. In his letter to Greene of September 6, Whitman wrote: "I think we have at no time been as much in the affections of the people as now. A much kinder disposition is manifested toward us, now more than at any former period,—exhibiting the feeling that they could not do without us." On November 3, he wrote again to Greene: "I have never felt more contented in my work and that I was usefully employed than for the last year and at present."

Narcissa expressed similar views in her letter of February 8, 1847, to Mrs. Alvin T. Smith: "We some times talk about going to the Willamette ourselves to live—not that we wish to leave the Indians so long as they will let us stay among them—but if the necessity should come that we must leave them, then we shall find it pleasant to seek some quiet spot among the society of our friends where we may enjoy something of the foretaste of our eternal rest... As it regards the Indians at this station, we feel that our influence for good was never greater among them, than now." And on the following May 19, Whitman in another letter to Greene wrote: "We think the affairs of this Station in regard to the Indians [are] in a very favorable state, such as gives promise of still continued prosperity." But this was the lull before the storm; the prelude to the final tragedy.

It should be remembered that these favorable conditions prevailed after Dr. McLoughlin, Nesmith, and others had advised Whitman in the spring of 1845 to move from Waiilatpu. The fact that he had weathered several crises gave Whitman a false feeling of security. He relied too much on the goodwill of the natives.

An unfavorable development for the safety of the Whitmans at Waiilatpu came in the summer of 1846 when Archibald McKinlay, who had been so influential in restraining the violence of the Cayuses, was succeeded by William McBean as Chief Trader in charge of Fort Walla Walla. In 1832 Simpson had written the following appraisal of McBean: "...a half breed—about 25 years of age—4 years in the service, writes a fair hand and understands common accounts which is the extent of his education—neither bright nor useful and as yet being equal to the charge of a small Post."¹ McBean had been given charge of a small post at Fraser's Lake, New Caledonia, in 1841, where, evidently, he had made good or he would not have been given the responsibility of being placed in charge of Fort Walla Walla. Whitman informed Greene of the change of command in his letter of September 8, 1847, and stated that McBean was a "papist." McBean did not have the force of character of McKinlay and thus was unable to control the impetuous Cayuses. Being a Roman Catholic, he was sympathetic to the plans of the priests when, in the fall of 1847, they attempted to establish two missions in the vicinity of Waiilatpu. Of this, more will be said later.

Another change in the affairs of the Hudson's Bay Company in Oregon is worthy of note. Dr. McLoughlin retired in the spring of 1846 and moved to Oregon City where, in 1849, he took out American citizenship. McLoughlin ruled, as some have said, as the "uncrowned king of Oregon" for twenty-two years, 1824–1846. So great was his influence over the Indian tribes of Oregon during those years that none dared make war against the whites. It appears to be more than a coincidence that, within eighteen months of his retirement, the Cayuse Indians attacked Waiilatpu. It may be that these Indians had become aware of the declining influence of the Hudson's Bay Company and, therefore, felt free of former restraints.

THE EMIGRATION OF 1846

The emigration of 1846 was smaller than that of the preceding year. Bancroft estimated that about 2,500 left the Missouri frontier that year, of whom 1,500 or 1,600 went to Oregon, the others going to California.² A new route to the Willamette Valley, which branched off the Old Oregon Trail below Fort Hall, had been explored and opened by Jesse and Lindsay Applegate. It followed the Humboldt River, crossed some mountains to the Pit River, then by way of the Klamath Lakes, it finally reached the Willamette. With the opening of the road along the Umatilla in 1845, and this new southern route across the Cascades in 1846, the Whitman mission no longer enjoyed a favored position on the Oregon Trail. It was now on a side road, and only those in urgent need of provisions, the sick, or the weary took the longer route past Waiilatpu. To Whitman's disappointment, these new developments meant that he was unable to sell sufficient provisions to the immigrants to bring his station to a self-supporting basis.

In his letter to Greene of September 8, Whitman said that the immigration had arrived in Oregon much earlier than had been the case in previous years and that: "Thus far no calls have been made upon me for provisions." He also reported: "Mrs. Spalding has a brother who arrived here this morning and is on his way to the station [i.e., to Lapwai]." Horace Hart, a younger brother of Eliza, remained with the Spaldings for more than a year until the family was forced to leave Lapwai after the Whitman massacre. He was the only near relative of any member of the Oregon Mission who went out to Oregon during the mission period. To Narcissa's keen disappointment, no member of her family was among the 1846 immigrants.

Among those who called at Waiilatpu that fall was Anson Sterling Cone, who in later years told how he and his brother Aaron had arrived at the mission about the middle of October and, being in need of a pack horse, proposed to Whitman that they be allowed to work out the price of a horse. "Boys," replied Whitman, "you had better take 'Bob' there and all the provisions you need and go at once. At the end of the season, there will be those coming who will have to stay here anyhow and I had better have work for them." So the Cone brothers took the horse, a trusty white Cayuse pony, and the next summer paid Whitman \$25.00 for it and for the provisions received.³ Anson Cone remembered the doctor

as being “sociable and a good joker.” Later he served on the jury which convicted the five Cayuses for their part in the Whitman massacre.

From previous experience, Whitman knew that he could expect some needy families of the immigration to stop over at Waiilatpu. Such was the case in the fall of 1846. On November 3, Whitman reported to Greene: “...a party came this way and as is usual with the last of the [immigration]... some among [them] were in very needy circumstances, their teams being very much reduced and quite unfit to proceed. A number also were sick and stopped to winter with us. Six families and some young men remain. The families do not expect to go on until they can pass the Cascade Mountains in June. I shall try to employ them to the advantage of the Mission and the Indians, so as to give them a living, but not to call for funds from the Board. I wish much to have the Indians aided in fencing and ploughing their land.” Among those who remained at Waiilatpu to work for Whitman was Joseph Stanfield.⁴

In Whitman’s letter to Greene of April 1, 1847, we find more details regarding the 1846 immigration. He wrote: “Of those who stopped, four were very sick. Two or three must have died in all probability if they had not stopped & obtained Medical aid & rest. Three births have occurred also among those who stopped: —the expectation of that event caused them to stop with us for the winter. In all six families besides eight young men wintered with us.”

By the time Whitman wrote this letter, he had learned of the great suffering endured by the part of the immigration which had taken the Applegate cut-off. This news caused him to write: “The disaster was great again last year to those who left the track which I made for them in 1843 as it has been in every attempt to improve it. Not that it cannot be improved but it shows what it requires to complete a safe passage and may not fail to demonstrate what I did in making my way to the States in the winter of 42 and 43 after the third of October. It was to open a practical route & safe passage and [make] a favourable report of the journey... which, in connection with other objects caused me to leave my family & brave the toils & dangers of the journey... In connection with this let me say the other great object for which I went was to have the Mission from being broken up just then which it must have been as you will see by a reference to the doing of [the Prudential] Committee which confirmed the recall of Mr. Spalding only two weeks before my arrival in Boston.”

Here again Whitman commented on the reasons for his journey East in 1842–43: to promote Oregon emigration and to save his Mission.

THE WINTER OF 1846–1847

Although exact figures are lacking it appears that between forty-five and fifty white people were living at the Whitman mission during the winter of 1846–47. This number would have included the three families and the five single men who were living at the sawmill [Letter 210]. The fact that Whitman sent eight men to the mill is evidence of the importance he placed on getting rails split for fences and lumber sawed for buildings.

By the fall of 1846 Whitman realized that no real progress could be made in inducing the Indians to cultivate until their fields could be fenced. When away on expeditions for food they had to leave their fields unattended with the result that their crops were often destroyed by wandering horses or cattle. Sometimes the offending animals belonged to Whitman with the result that he was blamed for the damage.

Commenting on his work with the natives Whitman wrote to Greene on April 1 1847: “The Indians continue to give the same degree of attention to religious instruction as formerly. I have made large preparation to aid them in cultivating by getting near 20 thousand rails split for them & I hope to plough additional prairie for them as much as they can fence.” On the following May 19, he reported having men plowing with “two large ploughs with strong ox teams for three weeks, and shall continue for about two weeks more” [Letter 215].

Whitman’s great desire to see the Indians settled never abated. He firmly believed that they would have to abandon their age-old habits of going hither and yon in search of food and settle down and be farmers before they could be educated and Christianized. As has been stated, this was exactly the policy of the United States Government in its dealings with the eastern Indians, except that the government was not especially interested in Christianizing but rather in civilizing them.

As the Whitmans entered upon their tenth year of residence at Waiilatpu, Marcus was able to tell Greene that his wife’s health was “better than in some former years” [Letter 200]. Certainly her letters written during these months reflect a happy, contented spirit. On November 3, in a letter to her mother, Narcissa wrote: “We set the table

for more than twenty every day three times—and it is a pleasing sight.” Nineteen-year-old Mary Johnson, a daughter of one of the immigrant families, was hired for \$1.50 a week to assist Narcissa. The services of a kindhearted, motherly woman by the name of Mrs. Pugh were also secured. Of her Whitman wrote to Walker: “We have a fine, pious old lady, fifty-seven years old, who does work for her board but keeps her own sugar & coffee. It is sewing that she does mostly” [Letter 209a]. With better health and reliable help in the home, Narcissa was able to write on November 2: “I never have been more comfortably situated for the winter than I am now.”

Whitman was called to Lapwai during the first part of December to attend Mrs. Spalding, who gave birth to a daughter on December 12. She was called Amelia and was the last of the four Spalding children. In addition to three babies born to immigrant women at Waiilatpu that fall, Whitman was also called to Fort Walla Walla on an obstetrical case before the end of the year.

Since Andrew Rodgers was concentrating on his ministerial studies and at the same time trying to master the Nez Perce language, the Whitmans hired William Geiger to teach the school for white children. Geiger, who had taken care of the Whitman station during most of the time Whitman was away in 1842–43, had gone to the Willamette Valley in the fall of 1843. He was a reliable person whom the Whitmans were delighted to welcome back to Waiilatpu.

In her letter to Mary Walker dated November 6, 1846, Narcissa said: “Mr. Geiger is one of the best teachers and managers of children I ever saw. He has concluded to stay until Feb.” Whitman wrote to the Methodist missionaries at The Dalles and offered to provide room and board to any of their children whom they might wish to send to the school for \$1.25 per week [Letter 199]. The Spaldings sent their two eldest children, Eliza and Henry, and six or seven from the immigrant families attended. The total enrollment, therefore, was about eighteen.

The Whitmans, especially Narcissa, continued to enjoy the fellowship of Andrew Rodgers. She felt that he would have made a good husband for her sister Jane and was instrumental in getting the two to exchange a few letters. Writing to Jane on April 15, 1847, she said: “I can assure you it is no small comfort to have some one to sing with who knows how to sing, for it is true, Jane, I love to sing just as well as ever.

From what I have heard of Edward, it would be pleasant to hear him again; as for you, *kala tilapsa kunku*⁵ (I am longing for you continually to sing with), and it may be, put us all together, with the violin which Mr. Rodgers plays, we should make music such as would cause the Indians to stare." And in this same letter, she wrote: "We talk, sing, labour, and study together; indeed, he is the best associate I ever had, Marcus excepted, and better than I ever expect to get again, unless you and Edward come and live with me." Rodgers was able to relieve Whitman in taking over much of the responsibility for the Sunday worship services for white residents at Waiilatpu. Often a sermon by the well-known Presbyterian minister, the Rev. Albert Barnes of Philadelphia, would be read. Occasionally Rodgers would read "a discourse of his own composition in the form of a dissertation," as a part of his theological course [Letter 208].

SEVERITY OF THE WINTER WEATHER

The severity of the winter of 1846–47 in the Old Oregon country has sometimes been listed as one of the causes contributing to the restlessness of the natives. Catherine Sager wrote: "This was the coldest winter ever known in this country. Snow lay three feet deep on the ground for several weeks and the winter was bitterly cold. The mill stream was so frozen that no grinding could be done for some time, and so we lived on boiled wheat and corn in the meantime."⁶

Spalding reported that the winter was "the severest winter as to snow, cold weather, & want of grass ever known by the oldest Indians in the region."⁷ On the 16th and 17th of January, the thermometer at Lapwai dipped to 30° below zero. The Indians in their skin or woven mat lodges were ill-prepared for such severe cold weather. Spalding estimated that the Nez Perces lost about one half of their horses and cattle. Wild game likewise suffered, which in turn meant less food from the hunt. The diaries of Elkanah and Mary Walker tell of the great loss of horses and cattle suffered by the Hudson's Bay Company and the Indians of their area. On March 1, 1847, Walker noted that only twenty horses had survived from the Company's herd of 220 at Fort Colville and on April 6, he wrote that one of the chiefs of the Spokane Indians had only two head of cattle left out of a band of fifty. Walker and Eells were able to save most of their animals because they had laid up a supply of grain and fodder,

but even so they were obliged to cut down trees in order to give their horses and cattle a chance to eat the pine needles and the tree moss.

Since Waiilatpu was located in a more southerly zone, the loss of animals was not as great there as further north; nevertheless Whitman, in his letter to Greene of April 1, 1847, wrote: "At our station we have had a heavy loss in sheep, calves, and some cattle (old cows), colts & horses." Since Whitman had not been able to sell much, if any, corn and wheat to the immigrants of 1846, he had a supply on hand to feed his livestock. His reference to a "heavy loss" was to that suffered by the natives. The Indians in the vicinity of Waiilatpu did not lose as many horses and cattle as did the Nez Perces and the Spokanes, yet the severe winter seems to have contributed to their restlessness. Catherine Sager wrote: "The natives blamed the white people for bringing the cold."

TROUBLE AT LAPWAI

Although the attitude of the natives at Waiilatpu remained friendly during the winter of 1846–47, such was not the case at Lapwai. On February 3, 1847, Spalding wrote a long letter of twenty-seven foolscap pages to Greene in which he gave a gloomy picture of the situation he faced. A rough element among the Nez Perces, inspired by Old James, the medicine man and chief who lived in the Lapwai Valley, had so terrorized those who wanted to continue in the mission school that it had to be closed. Windows were broken, property stolen or destroyed, and the lives of the Spaldings threatened.⁸ "What heart have I to replace the windows and repair the roof to the meeting house," wrote Spalding, "when it is almost certain that the windows will be immediately broken out again. If I build a good fence, it is with the probability that it will be burnt up by those who may camp near it... We are now called upon to pay for the water we use, the wood we burn, the trails we travel in, and the air we breathe."

When Whitman heard of the harassments which the Spaldings were experiencing, he became increasingly concerned about what might happen at Waiilatpu. If a small band of unruly Nez Perces could cause so much trouble, what might the more volatile Cayuses do if they got stirred up. Whitman found it necessary to go to Fort Vancouver for supplies in the early spring of 1847. In a letter written at the Fort on April 1, he said: "...we live at all times in a most precarious state not knowing

whether to stay or go nor at what time nor how soon. Whether it may be demanded by the Indians or the Board, I think in the course of the ensuing summer I shall locate claim for land in this lower Country to be ready in case of retirement.”

THE METHODISTS GIVE WASKOPUM TO THE AMERICAN BOARD

A surprising development came in 1847: the Methodists gave their Waskopum station to the American Board. Seven years earlier, some members of the Oregon Mission of the American Board, especially A. B. Smith, had been considering giving their work in Oregon to the Methodists. Now the very opposite happened.

Here is the background of events. The Rev. George Gary who succeeded Jason Lee as superintendent of the Methodist Mission in Oregon, arrived in the Willamette Valley on June 1, 1844, with instructions to liquidate the Mission property as soon as possible. The last station to remain in Methodist hands was Waskopum at The Dalles where the Rev. A. F. Waller was in charge, assisted by the layman, H. B. Brewer. It is possible that Gary had written to Whitman sometime before September 1846 suggesting that the American Board assume the responsibility for Waskopum. In his letter to Greene of September 8, Whitman brought up the subject: “The Methodists have been upon the point of relinquishing their last station at the Dalls [sic]. A most important point to be kept. This would make a good addition to us.” Whitman appreciated the strategic location of Waskopum on the road linking upper Oregon with the Willamette settlements.

Whitman was most receptive to the suggestion that the American Board take over the Methodist work at The Dalles, for this possibility dovetailed into another plan which Whitman had in mind. He had repeatedly urged Greene to send a minister to assist him at Waiilatpu. On February 25, 1846, Greene wrote to Whitman: “I am aware that you are alone—that your profession is not that of a preacher—and that if you give a larger share of your time to the spiritual concerns of the Indians, not a little of what you are now doing must be neglected, or at least attended to imperfectly. And it is in view of your destitution of helpers that I suggested in one of my letters whether Messrs. Eells and Walker should not abandon or suspend their operations at Tshimakain

and remove one of them to your station, and the other to some point—perhaps Kamiah.”⁹ Greene’s suggestion that Tshimakain be closed and its ministers reassigned suggested the possibility that one of them might go to Waskopum.

Of the three stations of the Oregon Mission, that among the Spokanes was always the least promising. The field did not offer the same agricultural possibilities as the Clearwater and Walla Walla Valleys. Spokane Garry, who had spent several years at the Red River Mission school, and from whom so much was expected, had failed to cooperate. His refusal to give up polygamy may have been a reason for his attitude.

The two missionary couples lived at Tshimakain for eight years without having the joy of seeing a single Spokane Indian convert join the Mission church. Greene’s suggestion, therefore, that Tshimakain be abandoned was reasonable. A serious objection, however, lay in the fact that the two couples had learned the Spokane and not the Nez Perce language. This meant that if they were transferred, they would have to use interpreters or set themselves to the laborious task of learning another language.

We do not know when Whitman received Greene’s letter of February 25, 1846; circumstantial evidence indicates that he had received it before he called on Superintendent Gary of the Methodist Mission at Oregon City in March 1847. When Gary asked Whitman whether the American Board was interested in taking over Waskopum, the latter replied: “...if they had not taken that station in the spring of 1838, *we* should have done so in the fall” [Letter 215]. Gary and Whitman made no final arrangements at that time for the transfer of the property as Whitman wanted to discuss the proposal with his associates. Undoubtedly Whitman was then considering the possibility of having the Eells family live at Waiilatpu and the Walkers move to The Dalles. A meeting of the Mission was scheduled for Tshimakain during the last week of May or the first of June. Final decisions on this important matter had to be postponed until that time.

When Marcus returned to Waiilatpu and told Narcissa of the possibility that the Oregon Mission might obtain the Methodist station at The Dalles and of the need to have the Mission vote on this proposal at its annual meeting, Narcissa felt that she should attend. Writing to Mary Walker on March 30, she said: “I shall be strongly tempted to go to

Tshimakain... I mean I would go if I could, and shall be tempted to try, or would if I could ride native fashion, but I do not know how, neither do I think I can learn." Narcissa had not been to Tshimakain since the summer of 1841 nor had she left Waiilatpu since the late fall of 1843. Her desire to go overcame her scruples about the impropriety of white women riding astride for, as will be told, she made the trip.

Sometime during the middle of May, Eells arrived at Waiilatpu in order to get supplies which Whitman had brought up the river from Fort Vancouver. This gave Whitman an opportunity to discuss with him the idea of closing Tshimakain and of having the Eells family move to Waiilatpu and the Walkers to Waskopum. Eells was inclined to accept the plan but wanted to discuss it with the Walkers before giving his final decision. After arrangements were made for Mary Johnson to take care of all of the children except Catherine Sager, who was to go, Eells with Mrs. Whitman, Rodgers, and Catherine set out for Tshimakain on May 18. Whitman who was able to travel much faster than the Eells party, remained at Waiilatpu for a few days to help the last immigrants who had wintered there leave for the Willamette Valley.

On May 18, just a few hours before the Eells party left, Whitman received a letter from Waller and Brewer stating that they had been authorized by Gary to give the Waskopum station complete with buildings and improvements "without charge" to the Oregon Mission. Reporting this new development in a letter to Greene dated May 19, Whitman stated that the Methodists wanted to transfer the property during the course of that summer or early fall. Whitman wrote: "This will open a new field for our Mission and one we can by no means fail to occupy. For if we allow the Papists to take this station, we might as well give up this [Waiilatpu] also. Immediate action will be had in the matter at our coming meeting... Your letters to the Mission in regard to Tshimakain Station may have something to do with the taking of the station at the Dalls [sic]."

The Eells party, traveling by easy stages, arrived at Tshimakain on Thursday, May 27. One of the Cayuse Indians who went along to help with the packing and the care of the animals was Frank Escaloom (Ish-ish-kais-kais). Members of the Eells party quickly told the Walkers of the prospective closing of Tshimakain and of their possible transfer to Waskopum. Both Elkanah and Mary were dismayed. Elkanah wrote in

his diary on the 29th: "I wished I was out of the mission." Mary showed a more determined spirit when she wrote in her diary the next day: "Our minds are made up, let others do as they may, we will remain where we are at present." Narcissa, who enthusiastically favored the idea of having the Oregon Mission take over the Waskopum station, tried to persuade Mary to agree to the transfer. On June 1, Mary wrote in her diary: "Mrs. W. took dinner & supper with us. In the afternoon we talked over the disagreeable matters."¹⁰

Whitman and Spalding, coming over separate trails, arrived at Tshimakain on Wednesday evening, June 2. Thus all members of the Mission were present except Mrs. Spalding, in what proved to be their last business meeting. Early Thursday morning, Whitman asked Walker to join him in a walk. "He opened the subject to me of my going to the Dalles," wrote Walker in his diary. "I told him that he should not think of my going there." Whitman outlined the plan to Spalding who at once enthusiastically endorsed the idea. When Eells discovered the opposition of the Walkers, he tried to take a neutral position. On Friday, Walker, after considerable persuasion, finally consented to visit Waskopum and make a first-hand investigation. Mary wrote in her diary that evening: "The Mission expressed a unanimous wish that we should go & Mr. W. concluded to harken... Much feeling was manifested on the occasion. We find it very trying to our feelings to think of separating or of leaving these people." Narcissa, in her last extant letter to her mother dated July 4, 1847, told of the decision and wrote: "All seemed to feel that we had come to an important crisis and that God alone could and must direct us."

The Whitmans and the Spaldings left for their respective homes on Monday, June 7. Walker left two days later. He rode first to Waiilatpu where Whitman joined him in the ride to The Dalles. In spite of all the arguments that Whitman was able to muster in favor of the Walkers moving to Waskopum, Walker was unconvinced. He saw the importance of keeping this station in Protestant hands. He knew that he was the logical choice of his brethren to occupy that strategic place. Yet, the very thought of starting life in another frontier post in the midst of a tribe speaking a different language filled him with dread. After being away from his home for three weeks and after a weary 600-mile horseback ride, Walker returned to Tshimakain on June 30. He found his wife deeply opposed to the suggested move. She was pregnant and was to give

birth to her sixth child, a son, on December 31st. On July 2, Walker wrote in his diary: "Mrs. Walker said that my going to the Dalls would be at the peril of her life. That at once decided me."¹¹

THE SUMMER OF 1847

On July 4, 1847, Alanson Hinman unexpectedly arrived at Waiilatpu. After serving as a teacher of the school for white children at the Whitman station during the winter of 1844–45, Hinman had gone to the Willamette Valley, where, for a time, he was employed by the Methodists to teach in their Oregon Institute. He had married a young woman, Martha Gerrish, who had gone out to Oregon with her family in 1845, and they had become the parents of a child. Hinman had returned to the upper Columbia country with the idea of borrowing the Mission press "for the purpose of printing another paper in the Willamette" [Letter 217]. Whitman was agreeable to the plan, but asked Hinman to call on the three other men of the Mission to get their consent. All agreed; thus Hinman was able to take the press to The Dalles. Thus it escaped the fate of being lost or destroyed when the Spaldings were obliged to abandon their station.¹²

On July 13, Whitman still had not heard of Walker's decision not to go to The Dalles, for on that day he wrote to Walker and told of the arrival in the Willamette Valley of the Rev. William Roberts, who was the successor to Gary. Roberts, however, was to concentrate on Methodist work for white settlers. He was, therefore, as eager as his predecessor to transfer the Methodist property at Waskopum to the American Board.

Sometime before July 26, Whitman received a letter from Walker stating that he and his wife were unwilling to go to The Dalles; they would remain at Tshimakain with the Eellses. Whitman was deeply disappointed. Narcissa in her letter to her mother, begun on July 4, wrote: "Mr. W. is unwilling to remove with his family this year, on account of Mrs. W. being in a state of pregnancy, which was known at the time of the meeting but not made an objection."¹³

In Whitman's last extant letter to Walker, dated July 26, he expressed his regret that Walker could not act "in accordance with the action of the Mission." On July 30 Mary noted in her diary: "Mr. W. received a rather severe letter from Dr. W." The whole affair caused the Walkers much unhappiness.

Walker's refusal to move with his family to The Dalles placed Whitman in a difficult position. Negotiations with the Methodists had already proceeded to such an extent that he felt he could not honorably withdraw. On August 3, Whitman in a letter to Greene said: "We cannot let this station go into other hands than ours if they [i.e., the Methodists] give it up. Should it fall into other hands, it might at once become a papal station or a petty trading post—if not a grog shop." The season was too late for another Mission meeting to be called. The only course open to Whitman was to hire someone to take temporary possession of Waskopum in the hope that the American Board would send out a qualified missionary to occupy the station. Circumstantial evidence indicates that Whitman was able to see Hinman before the latter left for The Dalles with the mission press and that Hinman expressed his willingness to accept the responsibility of taking charge of the Waskopum property for the time being.

Whitman then thought of his nephew Perrin, who had by that time acquired an excellent command of the Nez Perce language and who had often conducted religious services for the Cayuse Indians "much to their satisfaction." Perrin expressed his willingness to go and spend the winter with the Hinmans at Waskopum. In his letter to Greene of September 13, Whitman explained the arrangements: "The religious instruction of this place will devolve on Perrin B. Whitman, my nephew, who will only be eighteen years old in April. But in many respects he is promising & has had a good degree of experience with me... Neither Mr. Spalding nor myself can at all compare with him in speaking or reading the Nez Perce language." The Indians at The Dalles, however, spoke the language of the Walla Walla Indians which differed from the Nez Perce tongue. Anticipating his new responsibilities, Perrin began a study of the Walla Walla language using some linguistic aids prepared by H. K. W. Perkins before he left Waskopum [Letter 219].

In Whitman's letter to Greene of August 3, he mentioned the fact that the Mission at its June meeting had accepted his proposal to build "houses at this Station, so that the Mothers of the families of this Mission might winter here and send their children to school... I have an abundance of lumber sawed—but recent developments show that the houses will not be required this year for any except it may be for Mrs. Spalding." Whitman's plan was for all of the women of the Mission with

their children to spend the winter months at Waiilatpu so that those of school age could attend the Mission school. The inventory of the property left at Waiilatpu after the massacre includes the item: "40,000 feet sawed lumber including timber & boards for two houses (32 x 26), 1/3 drawn to station, 20 miles at \$25.00 per thousand. \$1,000.00." ¹⁴ Whitman's vision of what could be done for the welfare of the Mission families far outran the willingness of his colleagues to accept his practical suggestions. Although the Walkers had two children of school age and the Eellses had one, neither family was willing to enroll them for the term beginning in the fall of 1847. Perhaps this reluctance grew out of a sensitivity engendered by the troubled Waskopum situation.

Whitman was not confining his building plans just to the accommodation of the families of the Mission. In his letter of September 13 to Greene, he wrote: "We must have two schools. One for the children of the Mission, and a boarding school for the natives." Here is evidence of Whitman's plans to expand his work for the natives at Waiilatpu before he learned of the intentions of the Roman Catholics to establish two missions in his vicinity.

THE HINMANS AND PERRIN WHITMAN MOVE TO WASKOPUM

Hinman with the mission press left for The Dalles sometime in August. After leaving the press at the Methodist mission, Hinman continued on to the Willamette Valley to get his family. Whitman and his nephew left for Oregon City about the middle of August, as Whitman needed to see Roberts about the transfer of the Waskopum station to the Oregon Mission. Whitman learned that Waller had come to feel that it was a great mistake for the Methodists to abandon their work at The Dalles. In his letter of September 13 to Greene, Whitman quoted Waller as saying: "He could not bear to have his denomination abandon the heathen of Oregon as it would do if they gave up this Station." Under Methodist polity, however, the superintendent, acting under instructions of the Methodist Missionary Society, could overrule the opinions of local workers. While in the Valley, Whitman made arrangements for a boat to carry the Hinman family and their possessions up the river to The Dalles, and then for the same boat to take the Waller and Brewer families and their possessions down the river.

Whitman, the Hinmans, and Perrin arrived at The Dalles sometime before September 7, as is indicated in the following taken from Whitman's letter of the 13th to Greene: "I write to let you know that our Mission has now taken this Station. Mr. Wallers and Brewers families left here on the 7th. instant when we came into possession according to previous arrangements." Whitman reported that the cost to the Mission was \$721.13, which included the value of farming tools, some grain, livestock, household furniture, and moving expenses. The Methodists made no charge for the buildings, material improvements, or for their claim to 640 acres of land. Of this amount, Whitman was able to pay \$69.75 which left a balance of \$651.38 due to be paid the next year. In this letter, Whitman again urged Greene to send at least "one ordained Minister at the earliest date."

Having made the best possible arrangements for the occupation of Waskopum, Whitman hastened back to Waiilatpu to make such preparations as he could for the coming immigration.

ARTIST PAUL KANE VISITS WAILLATPU

During the summer and fall of 1847, two artists visited Waiilatpu and made sketches of natives. The first was Paul Kane, a Canadian, who traveled through the Pacific Northwest that summer sketching and painting pictures, especially of Indians. In his *Wanderings of an Artist*, he tells of his visit to Fort Walla Walla in July. After making an excursion to see Palouse Falls, he rode to Waiilatpu where he arrived on July 18. Kane reported that the day was "intensely hot" and that there was no shelter along the way to give relief from "the scorching rays of the sun." The Whitmans gave Kane a cordial welcome and he remained with them for four days. He was impressed with the material progress he saw at Waiilatpu and wrote of Whitman: "He had brought forty or fifty acres of land... under cultivation, and had a great many heads of domestic cattle, affording greater comfort to his family than one would expect in such an isolated spot."

Whitman took Kane to Tiloukaikt's camp. Kane wrote his impressions as follows: "These Indians, the Kye-use, resemble the Walla-Wallas very much. They are allies in war, and their language and customs are almost identical, except that the Kye-use Indians are far more vicious and ungovernable." It should be noted that Kane published his account of

his visit to Waiilatpu after he had learned of the Whitman massacre and had discovered that two of the Cayuses he had sketched were ringleaders in it. This knowledge no doubt colored his description of the tribe and the following account of his experience with Tomahas: "Dr. Whitman took me to the lodge of an Indian called To-ma-kis, that I might take his likeness. We found him in his lodge sitting perfectly naked. (Evidently it was another hot day.) His appearance was the most savage I ever beheld, and his looks, as I afterwards heard, by no means belied his character. He was not aware of what I was doing until I had finished the sketch. He then asked to look at it, and inquired what I intended doing with it, and whether I was not going to give it to the Americans, against whom he bore a strong antipathy... I in vain told him that I should not give it to them; but, not being satisfied with this assurance, he attempted to throw it in the fire, when I seized him by the arm and snatched it from him. He glanced at me like a fiend and appeared greatly enraged, but before he had time to recover from his surprise, I left the lodge and mounted my horse, not without occasionally looking back to see if he might not send an arrow after me."¹⁵

According to J. Russell Harper, editor of *Paul Kane's Frontier*, Kane often made "minor and sometimes major changes" when he redrew and then painted his drawings.¹⁶ The original sketch of Tomahas shows a benign, peaceful looking individual whereas the painted portrait corresponds with his description: "His appearance was the most savage I ever beheld."¹⁷ [See comparison of Kane's sketch and the later portrait in this volume.] Kane also made two black and white sketches of "Til-au-kite." Although they differ from each other in several features, neither bears any likeness to the portrait, labelled to be that of Tiloukaikt, which is in the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Canada. The sketches show Tiloukaikt to be an old man, and so he was called by Catherine Sager, whereas the painted portrait gives the likeness of a much younger man.¹⁸

Among the Kane sketches in the Royal Ontario Museum is one labelled "The Whitman Mission." The drawing was made while the artist was looking towards the southwest. The building as sketched appears to be a hodgepodge of rooms, some one story and others higher, without any uniform gable line, yet the location of doors, windows, and chimneys agrees rather closely with the floor plan of the house as drawn under the direction of Elizabeth Sager Helm. [See illustration

in volume one.] It should be remembered that Kane was not making a finished drawing. This was nothing more than a rough sketch hastily drawn from which he may have expected to redraw a better picture at a later time. The grove of trees to the right of the house may have been the apple orchard which Whitman had planted in that location. Kane indicated a woodpile outside the central door which is also shown in Elizabeth Sager's outline. The absence of a uniform gable line and the lack of a distinct indication of the "T" shape have made positive identification difficult, yet indications, including the label, point to its being a completely authentic picture.

POSSIBLE SKETCHES OF MARCUS AND NARCISSA

In August 1968, Ross Woodbridge, an enthusiastic student of the Whitman story, went from his home near Rochester, New York, to Toronto in order to study a collection of between four and five hundred Kane sketches and paintings in the Royal Ontario Museum in that city. Knowing that Kane had spent several days with the Whitmans, Woodbridge was hoping to find something of interest in addition to the two known pictures labelled Tomahas and Tiloukaikt. Woodbridge was happy to find not only Kane's drawing of the Whitman house, but also two sketches which, although not labelled by Kane, might be of Marcus and Narcissa Whitman. Woodbridge was the first to propose this possibility. This tentative identification is based only on circumstantial evidence, yet, as will be indicated below, this is most convincing.

Before reviewing the evidence, it is well to note Kane's method of working. Drawing paper was scarce in the wilderness of Oregon and, therefore, the artist had to be parsimonious in its use. The Kane sketches in Toronto, of what might be Marcus and Narcissa, are on paper either torn or cut from a notebook or from some larger sheet. The page with the sketch of what might be Narcissa Whitman measures only 4 x 5 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches (Museum No. 946.15.299) and that of what might be Marcus Whitman, 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 4 $\frac{7}{8}$ inches (No. 946.15.293).¹⁹

The description of Narcissa given by those who knew her harmonize with the Kane sketch thought to be of her.²⁰ She is reported to have weighed 167 pounds in 1844, and the drawing shows a woman who is rather plump. Gray wrote that her form was "full and round," and the Rev. Levi Fay Waldo mentioned her "well rounded features." Kane's

sketch shows a woman with full breasts. Matilda Sager wrote: "She had reddish colored hair, parted in the middle and combed back and twisted in a knot."²¹ Others referred also to her custom of parting her hair in the middle, and this is the way Kane pictured her likeness. Matilda Sager has given us conflicting testimony regarding whether or not Narcissa would have worn a low-necked dress as indicated in Kane's sketch. In Matilda's pamphlet, *A Survivor's Recollections*, she tells that the half-breed Joe Lewis looted a wooden chest at the time of the massacre, which contained Narcissa's clothing, and gleefully displayed "five nice, fancy gauze kerchiefs of different colors, made to wear with a medium low-necked dress."²² Yet, according to another account given by Matilda on March 26, 1928, in her eighty-ninth year and just eighteen days before she died, Mrs. Whitman "never had her bare neck exposed."²³ Summer temperatures in the Walla Walla Valley often rise above 100°; when high-necked dresses under those conditions would have been most uncomfortable. Kane, as has been stated, referred to extremely hot weather at the time of his visit to Waiilatpu. It is also possible that he took certain liberties with the neckline of the dress, making it lower than it actually was.

The drawing thought to be of Marcus has much stronger circumstantial evidence to support the identification. Several who knew Whitman commented about his carelessness of dress. In this sketch, Kane pictures a man wearing a buckskin jacket and what might be called a slouch hat. Several of the descriptions of Whitman refer to his prominent aquiline nose. An undated clipping from the *Corning, New York, Leader*, commented on a picture of Samuel Whitman, a younger brother of Marcus, as follows: "There was a marked family resemblance, and the picture shows how Dr. Whitman would have looked had he lived to an old age."²⁴ When a picture showing the profile of Samuel, taken in his old age (which may have been the one referred to by the editor of the *Corning* paper), is compared with the sketch made by Kane, a striking similarity can be seen.²⁵

The most convincing circumstantial evidence to support the theory that this is an authentic drawing of Marcus Whitman is found in another sketch which, on first glance, appears to be nothing more than some idle doodling by the artist. This sketch is in the lower right hand corner of the drawing. When the page is turned upside down, one sees a sketch

of what appears to be a girl with a long pole or rake in her hands standing by a bonfire or a pile of wood. The suggestion has been made that since Kane had been along the Palouse River before going to Waiilatpu, this might be a girl standing by a stream holding the handle of a fish net. However, would the artist put such a sketch on his page before he had drawn the likeness of Whitman?

A more plausible explanation connects this small drawing with an incident related by Matilda Sager Delaney in her pamphlet, *The Whitman Massacre*. Matilda, who was eight years old at the time Kane visited Waiilatpu, wrote: "An artist named Kane was sent out by the British Government. He took [i.e., drew] pictures of the Mission. We children were cleaning up the yard and varying labor by trying to balance the rake [handle] on our fingers. Mrs. Whitman reproved us, saying she did not want that in the picture."²⁶ This indeed might be a sketch of a Sager girl standing by a bonfire and holding the handle of a rake. If this be true, then the presence of the smaller sketch on the page with the picture of a man gives strong endorsement to the identification of the drawing as being a likeness of Marcus Whitman.²⁷

The head of the girl in the original drawing measures only two millimeters in height, thus being too small for the artist to draw a face. However, under the left arm of the man is the face of a white girl. Was Kane planning to redraw this scene after he had returned to his studio and give the girl holding the rake this face? Perhaps so. Another unexplained mystery was the letter "W" which, when Woodbridge first examined the sketch, could be seen to the left of the brim of the hat the man was wearing. Did this letter stand for "Whitman"?²⁸

After reviewing the evidence above mentioned, I am convinced that these sketches by Kane are authentic likenesses of Marcus and Narcissa Whitman. In this conviction, I am joined by a number of informed students of the Whitman story who, after making a similar study of the evidences, have come to the same conclusion. A few, however, remain doubtful. At my request, an artist friend of mine, Drury Haight, has redrawn and then painted the Kane sketches. This addition of color surely adds a note of brightness to help the imagination. These paintings have been reproduced as the frontispieces in this work.

ARTIST JOHN MIX STANLEY VISITS WAILLATPU

The second artist who made a tour of the Pacific Northwest during the summer and fall of 1847, and who also visited Waiilatpu, was John Mix Stanley. Stanley, who hailed from the States of New York and Ohio, was touring the Great Plains and the Far West painting Indians. When he had completed his project, his portfolio contained pictures of Indians from forty different tribes. Stanley arrived at Fort Walla Walla on Saturday, September 25, where he spent a week or more painting Walla Walla Indians before going out to Waiilatpu where he hoped to meet the Whitmans and paint some Cayuse portraits. Unfortunately, when Stanley arrived at Waiilatpu, he found that both Dr. and Mrs. Whitman had gone to meet the immigrants on the Umatilla.

When Whitman and Perrin left Waiilatpu for the Willamette Valley about the middle of August 1847, they drove teams with two wagons to The Dalles where they left them and proceeded by boat down the Columbia the rest of the way to the Valley. Whitman found goods at Fort Vancouver which had been sent out by the American Board including a corn sheller, valued at \$15.00 in the Whitman inventory, and a thresher worth \$100.00. Whitman had requested Greene to send these items in his letter of October 25, 1844. It took about three years for them to arrive. On his return trip, Whitman took the machinery and other supplies by boat to The Dalles where they were loaded onto the wagons. Leaving Perrin with the Hinmans at Waskopum, Whitman returned to Waiilatpu with the two wagons having, perhaps, the assistance of an Indian. He arrived at his station about the middle of September.

On his way to The Dalles, Whitman had followed the road taken by the immigrants of previous years. Finding this filled with obstacles, Whitman on his return trip explored a new route. Of this Whitman wrote to Greene in his letter of October 18, which is the last extant letter that he wrote: "By following a small stream & then a dry ravine, I was enabled to avoid most of the hills & heavy obstacles to the old wagon road... After I came home, I went a second time which took me near two weeks and completed the route from the Utilla [i.e., Umatilla] to the place where I struck the old road before... This road takes them [i.e., the immigrants] a much shorter & better route by which they avoid many bad hills as well as all the sands of the Columbia and what is still more desirable, they have grass in abundance..."

A few days after Whitman left to guide the immigrants over the new road he had explored, Spalding arrived at Waiilatpu with a pack train loaded with wheat which he hoped to sell to the immigrants while they were along the Umatilla. Hearing of this, Narcissa decided to take the two Manson boys, John and Stephen²⁹ and Catherine Sager and go with him to the Umatilla, where she expected to meet her husband on his way back home.

Narcissa had a special reason for wishing to meet the immigrants; she was hoping to find a young woman who would be willing to teach the school for white children at Waiilatpu. Catherine in her reminiscences of the trip recalled that they did meet Dr. Whitman and that on Sunday, October 3, Spalding conducted a religious service for a party of immigrants. Because of the illness of a young man among the immigrants, the Whitmans were obliged to tarry for a few days, while the other members of the party returned to Waiilatpu on Monday, the 4th.

In her reminiscences, Catherine wrote that when they got back, they found "a young man there by the name of Stanley, just arrived from the lower country. He was an artist and was going on a tour through the country. He left next morning for Chimakain." During the absence of the Whitmans from Waiilatpu at the time of his visit, Stanley spent several days painting portraits of at least four Cayuses: Tiloukaikt, Tamsucky, Edward (son of Tiloukaikt whom Stanley called Painted Shirt or Shu-ma-hic-cie), and Waie-cat (son of Tamsucky). Stanley, disappointed in not seeing the Whitmans, promised to return in November, when he hoped to meet them and perhaps paint their portraits.

With the aid of some Indians, Stanley made his way up the Columbia River in a canoe to Fort Okanogan, stopping occasionally to paint. He then went to Tshimakain where, according to Mary Walker's diary, he arrived on Sunday, October 24. Stanley spent about a month at Tshimakain and Fort Colville continuing with his project of painting portraits of the natives. He started a portrait of eight-year-old Abigail Walker but, when she and some of her brothers came down with the measles, he had to lay the picture aside for several days. He went to Fort Colville on October 28 and returned to Tshimakain on November 9, when he completed Abigail's portrait and also painted her father.³⁰ The fact that the Walker children had measles is evidence that the epidemic, sweeping the Oregon country, had reached the Spokane area.

THE INTRODUCTION OF MEASLES

During the late summer of 1847 and the following fall and winter, a virulent form of measles and dysentery spread with devastating effects through all of Old Oregon, leaving an appalling harvest of death among the Indian tribes. Evidence of the presence of these diseases in the Walla Walla area before any of the 1847 immigration had arrived is to be found in an account told by the artist, Paul Kane.

A party of about two hundred Cayuse and Walla Walla Indians had left Fort Walla Walla about February 1, 1846, to go to Sutter's Fort in California to avenge the death of Elijah Hedding. After being gone for about eighteen months, many at Walla Walla began to believe that all had been killed. A dramatic incident took place at the fort the day after Kane had returned from his visit to Waiilatpu during the latter part of July, when a son of Peu-peu-mox-mox, a brother of the slain Elijah Hedding, suddenly arrived bearing sad news.

Kane, who was an eyewitness, wrote: "No sooner had he dismounted from his horse than the whole camp, men, women, and children, surrounded him eagerly inquiring after their absent friends, as they had hitherto received no intelligence, beyond a report that the party had been cut off by hostile tribes. His downcast looks and silence confirmed the fears that some dire calamity must have happened, and they set up a tremendous howl, whilst he stood silent and dejected with the tears streaming down his face. At length, after much coaxing and entreaty on their part, he commenced the recital of their misfortunes. After describing the progress of the journey up to the time of the disease (the measles) making its appearance, during which he was listened to in breathless silence, he began to name its victims one after another. On the first name being mentioned, a terrific howl ensued, the women loosening their hair and gesticulating in a most violent manner. When this had subsided, he, after much persuasion, named a second and a third, until he had named upwards of thirty."³¹

Kane became alarmed for the safety of the Whitmans when he learned that the Indians were inclined to blame the Americans for the introduction of the disease. He consulted with McBean who shared his concern. "I, therefore," wrote Kane, "determined to go and warn him [i.e., Whitman] of what had occurred. It was six o'clock in the evening

when I started, but I had a good horse, and arrived at his house in three hours. I told him of the arrival of the messenger, and the excitement of the Indians, and advised him strongly to come to the fort, for a while at least, until the Indians had cooled down; but he said he had lived so long amongst them, and had done so much for them, that he did not apprehend they would injure him. I remained with him only an hour, and hastened back to the fort, where I arrived at one o'clock a.m."

Kane was surprised to see how calmly Whitman took the news. Evidently Whitman correctly evaluated the attitude of the Indians at that time. He had been warned repeatedly of the danger of remaining at Waiilatpu, but somehow every crisis had passed. Whitman had a streak of obstinacy in him which also might be called a sense of commitment to his task. In July 1847, when the above incident took place, Whitman was making preparations to meet the needs of another immigration. A high sense of duty, plus a strong faith in the providence of God, kept him at his station.

The deadly effects of the measles and dysentery epidemics, which swept through the Old Oregon country in 1847, were aggravated by the age-old custom of the Indians to use their sweat-house for the treatment of disease. The sweat-house was a low, dome-shaped hut in which the sick person would sit naked while steam would be generated by pouring water over hot stones. After spending some time in the superheated, steam-filled atmosphere, the patient would then rush out and plunge into a cold stream.³² The shock to the body was often all that was needed to kill a person if, at the time, he had a high fever.

THE ROMAN CATHOLICS BEGIN TWO MISSIONS NEAR WAILLATPU

When Whitman was still at The Dalles in September, the first of the 1847 Oregon immigration began passing. He heard reports of the thousands who were on their way to Oregon and became convinced of the importance of being back at Waiilatpu in order to furnish supplies to those in need. Whitman arrived at Fort Walla Walla on his return trip on September 23 where he found seven Roman Catholic missionaries under the newly appointed Bishop of Walla Walla, the Right Rev. A. M. A. Blanchet, and learned to his dismay that the Catholics were planning to establish a number of stations in the upper Columbia River country,

two of which were to be in the vicinity of Fort Walla Walla.

Bishop Blanchet was a younger brother of the Rev. Francis Norbert Blanchet,³³ who was made the first Archbishop of Oregon. As has been stated, Fathers F. N. Blanchet and Modeste Demers were the first Roman Catholic missionaries to arrive in Oregon, having arrived in the fall of 1838. A. M. A. Blanchet was consecrated at Montreal on September 27, 1846, for the newly created missionary diocese of Walla Walla which included the vast territory lying between the Rockies and the Cascade Mountains north of the Mexican border. Bishop Blanchet with several priests and lay workers, including Father Pascal Ricard, a Superior of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, and Father J. B. A. Brouillet, arrived at Fort Walla Walla on September 5, where they were cordially welcomed by William McBean. According to Father Brouillet, Bishop Blanchet knew that "Towatowe [Young Chief], one of the Cayuse chiefs, had a house which he had destined for the use of the Catholic missionaries, and he intended to go and occupy it without delay."³⁴ As has been stated, Pambrun built a log cabin for Young Chief on the north bank of the Umatilla River, in the fall of 1840.³⁵ Since Young Chief was known to be friendly to the Roman Catholics and since he had made his cabin available to the priests, the Catholic missionaries were assured of a base of operations within the Cayuse tribe. Since Young Chief was absent on a hunt when the Catholic missionaries arrived at the Fort, the Bishop and his party were delayed in going to the Umatilla. Hence they were at the Fort when Whitman arrived on the 23rd.

SITE FOR THE SAINT ROSE MISSION SELECTED

While waiting for Young Chief to return, Bishop Blanchet and his associates consulted with Peu-peu-mox-mox about a possible site for a mission among the Walla Walla Indians. According to Father Ricard's journal, this chief was reluctant at first "to receive priests in his territory," but finally offered a location "on the right bank of the Columbia, at the mouth of the Yakima." This site was none other than that which W. H. Gray had selected for the station that he wanted to establish in the fall of 1839 and which was known as Shimnap, "about a day [journey] above Walla Walla."³⁶ The site is near present-day Richland, Washington.

Father Ricard wrote as follows of his visit to the proposed site: "I... there met several savages who were so well-disposed that, in spite of the

poorness of the land and the lack of timber, I decided to establish myself there. I had promised to place the first mission of the Oblates in Oregon under the protection of Saint Rose of Lima. I therefore named the area 'Saint Rose,' and my mission 'Saint Rose Mission.'" ³⁷ Father Ricard moved his few belongings to the site on October 12 after hiring two French Canadians at Fort Walla Walla to help him in the erection of a cabin. His mission work with the natives had barely gotten started before the Whitman massacre occurred, which brought everything to an abrupt end.³⁸

WHITMAN MEETS CATHOLIC MISSIONARIES AT THE FORT

For several years before the coming of the Roman Catholic missionaries to Fort Walla Walla, Young Chief had indicated his preference for the Catholics, whereas, his brother, Five Crows was a Protestant. When Dr. White met with the Cayuses in May 1843, for the purpose of persuading them to accept his code of laws and then for them to select one to be High Chief, Young Chief was the first choice of the tribe to be appointed to this position.

Young Chief, however, stepped aside because he favored the Catholics while the majority of the people preferred the Protestants. So his brother, Five Crows, was then chosen.³⁹ This difference in religious preference may have caused a spirit of rivalry to grow up between the brothers. We know that two of the Chief Traders at Fort Walla Walla, Pierre Pambrun and William McBean, were Catholics and extended favors to both the Catholic priests and to Young Chief. In November 1847, just a few days before the Whitman massacre, Young Chief turned his log cabin over to Bishop Blanchet and Father Brouillet, who named it the Saint Anne Mission.

The following extract from the unpublished journal of Bishop Blanchet tells of his meeting with Dr. Whitman:⁴⁰ "September 23 & 24. Mr. Whitman stopped at the Fort on his return from the Dalles. He is very unhappy over the arrival of the Bishop of Walla Walla. He admits that he does not like Catholics as such. He even goes so far as to declare that it is not necessary to be baptized to be a Christian. He attributes the Bishop's appointment to the influence of Tawatoe (the Young Chief). He is going to do all that he can to keep the Indians from becoming Catholics. He accuses the Catholics of always having persecuted the Protestants...

and he has promised to color the catholic ladder with blood to demonstrate the intolerance of the Catholics. This he has already begun to do by saying many harmful things about the priests to Yellow Snake⁴¹ [i.e., Peu-peu-mox-mox], chief of the Walla Wallas.”

The reference to the “catholic ladder” needs an explanation. As has been stated, both the Roman Catholics and the Protestant missionaries in Oregon used what was called a “ladder” to present their respective versions of church history. This consisted of a board, perhaps ten feet tall and a foot wide, which had horizontal lines drawn across it to indicate the centuries following the birth of Christ. Pictures were drawn within each segment to illustrate certain aspects of history which either group wished to emphasize. The ladders were mutually uncomplimentary. Whereas the Catholic ladder gave a vivid picture of such “heretics” as Luther and Calvin being cast into a fiery hell, the Protestant ladder showed the victim to be the Pope.⁴²

According to Ricard, Whitman was so agitated over the arrival of the Catholic missionaries at Walla Walla that one day, after butchering a steer, he “splashed the animal’s blood” over a Catholic ladder and gave it to an Indian, as a symbol of what might happen if the Catholic priests were permitted to remain among the Cayuses.⁴³ On December 20, following the massacre, when Ogden met with some of the Cayuse chiefs, Edward, a son of Tiloukaikt, gave Ogden one of these blood-smearing ladders, and claimed that Whitman had said: “*You see this blood! It is to show you that now, because you have the priests among you, the country is going to be covered with blood! You will have nothing but blood.*”⁴⁴

Bishop Blanchet claimed that Whitman resorted to this dramatic gesture in order to demonstrate “the intolerance of the Catholics.” Could it not be conjectured that this act revealed a deep latent fear in Whitman’s mind regarding his own safety? Could he not have been afraid that the very presence of the Catholics would unleash forces among the natives, unknown to the Catholic missionaries, which would eventually take his life? If so, the animal’s blood on the Catholic ladder would have been a symbol of his own blood.

On September 27, Bishop Blanchet noted: “Mr. McKay just arrived with his group from Vancouver. When he passed through the Dalles, Canassissi [a chieftain of that area] told him that the Indians desired to have some priests... Mr. McKay stated that two miles below the Meth-

odist Mission, there is a wonderful site for a mission.... This same gentleman also said that Dr. Whitman paid 600 dollars for the mission property of the Dalles.”

This “Mr. McKay” whom Bishop Blanchet mentioned was none other than Thomas McKay who was at the 1836 Rendezvous, where he first met the Whitmans and the Spaldings. It was he who, when he first realized that white women had crossed the Rockies, had said: “There is something that Dr. McLoughlin cannot ship out of the country so easily.” And it was he who consulted with Whitman in the spring of 1838 regarding the education of his three sons when they were traveling to the States with Jason Lee. Although McKay remained friendly with Whitman, he had by the fall of 1847 thrown his sympathy so much toward the Roman Catholic missionaries that he was willing to recommend a site at The Dalles within two miles of the Methodist property which Whitman had just purchased.

George Simpson’s “Character Book,” in the archives of the Hudson’s Bay Company, contains the following appraisal of McKay: “One of the best shots in the country and very cool and resolute among Indians; has always been employed on the most desperate service in the Columbia and the more desperate it is, the better he likes it. He is known to every Indian in that Department and his name alone is a host of strength carrying terror with it as he has sent many of them to their ‘long home,’ quite a ‘blood hound’ who must be kept under restraint; possesses little judgment and a confirmed liar but a necessary evil at such a place as Vancouver; has not a particle of feeling or humanity in his composition.”

Being fully aware of McKay’s reputation among the Indians, Whitman tried to hire him so that he would be at Waiilatpu. Of this McKay, in a statement made September 11, 1848, said: “Last fall, during my stay at Fort Walla Walla... the Doctor asked me to go and pass the winter with him, saying that he was afraid of the Indians. I told him I could not on account of my business... He told me also several times last fall that he would leave certainly in the spring for the Dalles. I am aware, moreover, that the Cayuses have a great many times ill treated Dr. Whitman.”⁴⁵

Father Brouillet baptized McKay at Fort Walla Walla on October 29, 1847. Following the example of his illustrious stepfather, Dr. McLoughlin, McKay “made an abjuration of heresy and a public confession of the

Catholic faith.”⁴⁶ McKay was then forty-seven years old. Bishop Blanchet noted in his journal for Sunday, November 7: “First Communion and Confirmation for Mr. Thomas McKay, the half-breed man, a few days ago became a convert from Anglicanism.”

CATHOLICS NEGOTIATE WITH YOUNG CHIEF AND TILOUKAIKT

Bishop Blanchet’s journal reveals the fact that he was discussing with both Young Chief and Tiloukaikt the possibility of establishing a mission in the vicinity of Waiilatpu. Whitman was fearful of just such a move and this, no doubt, accounted for his outspoken opposition to the coming of the Catholic missionaries to the vicinity. After having lived with Cayuses for eleven years, he knew that this would mean trouble.

Father Brouillet wrote regarding the conference Whitman had with the priests at Fort Walla Walla on September 23 and 24: “He refused to sell provisions to the bishop, and protested that he would not assist the missionaries unless he saw them in starvation.”⁴⁷

Ignoring Whitman’s objections to the establishment of a mission in the vicinity of Waiilatpu, and with little knowledge of the Cayuse character or appreciation of the explosive issues involved, Bishop Blanchet and his clergy went ahead with their plans to establish the desired mission. Bishop Blanchet called Tiloukaikt to the fort on October 2 and asked him if he would have any objection “to Dr. Whitman’s selling him some lumber.” The very fact that the Bishop sought Tiloukaikt’s permission to buy some of the lumber Whitman had on the grounds at Waiilatpu indicates the dictatorial power that Tiloukaikt was then exercising over Whitman. Tiloukaikt gave his consent for the purchase of the lumber, but wanted to consult his brother chiefs regarding the payment. He told the Bishop that “the Indians had prevented Mr. Spalding from building near Dr. Whitman.” This evidently refers to the house that Whitman had proposed building for Mrs. Spalding and her children to be used during the school term, but which, for some reason, was not erected.

Bishop Blanchet’s entry for October 2 continues: “He [Tiloukaikt] complained that Dr. Whitman had promised them many things but had not made good his promises. He related that he himself had told the Doctor that the Young Chief was master of all of his lands and that he had it in his power to permit the planting of a cross [a Catholic mission]

there if he so chose; that the piece of ground where he (the Doctor) resided belonged to him.” Here we see evidence that the Cayuses had come to appreciate their rights to land ownership. This had never been raised as an issue when, in 1836, they were eager to have missionaries settle in their midst.

On October 26, Young Chief called on Bishop Blanchet at the Fort. According to the Bishop’s journal, when Young Chief was asked whether the Cayuses would welcome Catholic missionaries, he replied: “...that he would welcome them warmly, but suggested that they reside near Dr. Whitman. He said that through his wife he had rights over the land belonging to Tilocate [Tiloukaikt]; that he is willing to turn over some of this land to the Missionaries if Tilocate consents to it and that he would be very happy if the Mission were to be erected at the aforementioned place.”

Bishop Blanchet then sent his interpreter to interview Tiloukaikt about the possibility of getting land for a mission. The evident willingness of Bishop Blanchet to establish a Catholic mission adjacent to the Protestant station at Waiilatpu is astounding. Tiloukaikt sent back word that there was indeed “enough land for the Missionaries to locate on his domains,” but added that he wanted to consult with the other chiefs first. He would then call on the Bishop. On Thursday, November 4, Tiloukaikt with several of his subchiefs, including one whom Brouillet called “Toursakay” [possibly Tamsucky] arrived at the Fort. A conference was held with the Bishop in the presence of McKay and, according to Brouillet, “all the persons at the fort who chose to witness it.”⁴⁸

Blanchet’s account of the interviews is as follows: “Tilocate led the conversation and asked many questions, among others: *whether the Pope was the one who had sent the Bishop; whether he was the one who had told him to ask for land; how did the priest live in the Bishop’s homeland—that is to say, who supplied them with the necessities of life; whether the priests would give gifts to the Indians; whether they would cultivate their land; whether they would help them build houses; whether they would provide food and clothing for the children, and many other questions.* After hearing what the Bishop had to say, Tiloukaikt stated that “he would give land for the Mission.”⁴⁹

Brouillet, in his report of the November 4 meeting at the Fort, wrote that Bishop Blanchet told Tiloukaikt that “he would not make presents to the Indians; that he would give them nothing for the land he asked;

that in case they worked for him, he would pay them for their work, and no more; that he would assist them neither in ploughing their lands nor in building houses, nor would he feed or clothe their children.”⁵⁰

The nature of many of the questions Tiloukaikt asked the Bishop reveals his interest in the material advantages which he hoped to receive should he permit the Catholics to build near Waiilatpu. The Bishop's clear statement that he would not pay for the land, nor would he give gifts or assist in ploughing, must have been deeply disappointing to Tiloukaikt. Whitman, Tiloukaikt knew, had helped the Indians plough and fence their fields, and then had built a mill and had ground their grain. Upon reflection, Tiloukaikt had some second thoughts.

On November 8, Bishop Blanchet sent Father Brouillet to inspect the site that Tiloukaikt had tentatively offered to make available for the Catholic mission. After meeting with the chief, Brouillet reported that Tiloukaikt “had changed his mind and refused to show it to me, saying that it was too small. He told me that he had no other place to give me but that of Dr. Whitman's, whom he intended to send away.” Could it be that Tiloukaikt even then was planning to kill the Whitmans?

Bishop Blanchet gave a slightly different version of Brouillet's report by writing on November 10 in his journal: “He found that the Cayouse of Dr. Whitman are well disposed toward the [Catholic] missionaries. Tilocate and his young braves want to break away from Dr. Whitman. They have even proposed to Fr. Brouillet that he take up residence near them for the winter and they promised to give him Dr. Whitman's land early enough in the spring for planting. This offer, of course, could not be accepted because the Doctor could then say that the priests are trying to make him leave. Consequently, Fr. Brouillet went to see Tawatoe immediately and found him ready to donate his house and part of his land as he had formerly promised.”

SAINT ANNE MISSION ESTABLISHED ON THE UMATILLA

On November 11 Bishop Blanchet sent one of the priests of his party, Father Rousseau “with two men and a wagon to make repairs on the house of Tawatoe.” Rousseau returned to the Fort on Friday, November 26, with the report that the house had been renovated and was ready for occupancy. The next day the Bishop, Father Brouillet and Deacon LeClaire left Fort Walla Walla for the Umatilla and arrived at their des-

mination about 3:30 p.m. The Bishop noted in his journal that the roof of the house had been “recovered with sod, the floors sealed, the doors and door-frames squared up and the chimneys rebuilt. Rush mats cover the floor...” Then in his characteristic style, referring to himself in the third person, he wrote: “The Bishop is happy to be able to say, along with his associates, that he is in his own house now, or at least that he has found shelter... This mission foundation among the Cayouse is under the protection of Saint Anne.”

The Mission of Saint Anne was destined to have an existence of only a few weeks as the massacre at Waiilatpu began on the Monday following the arrival of the Bishop and his associates at Young Chief’s.

AN APPRAISAL OF ROMAN CATHOLIC INVOLVEMENT

After the massacre, the Roman Catholic missionaries were severely criticized for their endeavor to establish a mission among the Cayuses so close to Waiilatpu. They should have realized, said some, that their very presence would have made trouble for the Protestants. In answer to such criticism, Father Brouillet wrote that at the time Bishop Blanchet and his party arrived at Fort Walla Walla, “it was publicly known that he had been for years speaking of leaving the Cayuse country.” Brouillet made mention of Whitman’s purchase of the Methodist station at The Dalles. “Under such circumstances,” Brouillet wrote, “it would not have been unnatural to believe that he would have liked to dispose of his property the same as any other individual.”⁵¹ Since Bishop Blanchet and his priests were new to Oregon, it could not be expected that they would appreciate the danger to which Whitman and his family were exposed by their proposal to establish a rival mission in the vicinity of Waiilatpu.

As has been stated, Whitman’s concern about the activities of the Roman Catholic missionaries in the Oregon country dated back to 1838 when the first two arrived. One of the reasons why Whitman made his ride East in 1842–43 was to induce the American Board to take some steps to counteract the growing Catholic influence in Oregon.⁵² His best suggestion was for the Board to sponsor the settlement of some Protestant families near its stations, especially near Waiilatpu.

In his last letter to Greene, dated October 18, 1847, Whitman mentioned hearing a report that the Catholics planned to establish colonies in the Walla Walla area. He then wrote: “I cannot blame myself that the

plan I laid down when I was in Boston was not carried out. If we could have good families, say two & three together, to have placed in select spots among the Indians, the present crisis which I feared would not have come.”⁵³

We have no evidence that either the Cayuse or the Catholic missionaries ever had any suspicion of Whitman’s plan to have Protestant families settle in the vicinity of Waiilatpu. If the Board had cooperated in such a plan, surely the Indians would have had added reason to be aroused. It is inconceivable that the presence of some Protestant families in the area would have prevented the massacre. On the other hand, this could well have hastened the tragedy.

The establishment of Saint Rose Mission, about forty miles to the northwest of Waiilatpu, and of Saint Anne Mission, about twenty-five miles to the south, marked the beginning of the end of the Oregon Mission of the American Board. Even had there been no measles epidemic and no subsequent massacre, the Whitmans would undoubtedly have moved to The Dalles in the spring of 1848, after having been flanked on two sides by Catholic missions. In that case, surely the families at Tshimakain and possibly the Spaldings at Lapwai would have been obliged also to leave their fields.

THE OREGON EMIGRATION OF 1847

The Oregon emigration of 1847 was larger than that of any preceding year. The best estimates indicate that over one thousand wagons and between four and five thousand people made the western trek that year. Chief Trader Grant at Fort Hall likened the straggling procession which filed past his post to a “travelling mob.”⁵⁴ There was no over-all organization. Groups of immigrants banded themselves together for mutual protection. Young single men and small family parties were able to push on ahead of the main body. By August 23, Narcissa was able to write: “For the past two weeks immigrants have been passing, probably 80 or 100 wagons have already passed and 1,000 are said to be on the road” [Postscript to Letter 217].

Never before had the Cayuse Indians who lived along the Oregon Trail or the natives along the south bank of the Columbia River been so inclined to steal and to harass the immigrants as they were that fall. When Whitman was on his way back to Waiilatpu from his trip to The

Dalles for supplies in September, he heard many accounts of the Indians stealing livestock and personal property from the immigrants. In a few instances, Whitman was able to recover the stolen property. After his return to Waiilatpu, Whitman, as has been stated, hastened to the Umatilla to guide the immigrants over a new road to The Dalles. He then did what he could to warn the immigrants to be on their guard. John E. Ross told of meeting Whitman on the Umatilla who advised him to use great caution. Ross and his party later “found four families who had been robbed of their cattle and stripped of their clothing. Six women and some children were left naked.”⁵⁵

Another account by a member of the 1847 immigration, who was a child at the time, remembered how Whitman was able to retrieve some items belonging to her family which had been stolen by Cayuse Indians. Elizabeth Ann Coonc, in her old age, wrote: “Upon our robbery being reported to Dr. Whitman, he called the Indians together; they gathered in a half-circle in front of the doctor, wrapped in their blankets, many with their faces painted with war paint, and the doctor began to arraign them about the theft. I looked on, standing beside my father (John Fenn) and holding his hand. As the doctor proceeded and the guilty consciences of the Indians were awakened, from time to time, a knife, fork or frying pan would be dropped by an Indian from beneath his blanket and when Dr. Whitman had finished, most of the stolen property was lying about on the ground at the feet of the Indians. One of the Indians threw down a skillet with considerable force and, as I thought, at the doctor, but father said, ‘No, they are mad.’”⁵⁶

WHITMAN MEMORIALIZES CONGRESS

After his return from the Umatilla during the first part of October 1847, Whitman, stirred by what he had seen and heard of the harassments inflicted on the immigrants by the Indians, decided to memorialize Congress in an appeal for government protection. His memorial, dated October 16, was addressed “To the Honorable the Secretary of War, To the Committees on Indian Affairs & Oregon in the Senate & House of Representatives of the United States.”⁵⁷

The memorial embodies many of the suggestions he had included in his proposed bill which he had submitted to the Hon. James M. Porter, Secretary of War, following his return from his visit to Washington and

Boston in 1843.⁵⁸ Again Whitman pled for the government to establish “a line of posts along the travelled route to Oregon at a distance, of not more than fifty miles [apart].” As in his proposed bill, he stressed the importance of these being “farming stations” where agricultural products could be raised and made available both to the military and to the passing emigrants. The military units attached to such posts would be responsible for keeping the Indians in subjection, suppressing the traffic in “ardent spirits,” and facilitating the transportation of the mails. Whitman estimated that “with a change of horses at every fifty miles,” the mail could be carried from “one hundred to one hundred & fifty miles in twenty four hours.” Here, again, he proposed a pony express.

Stressing the need of protection from marauding Indians, Whitman wrote: “Immigrants now lose horses and other stock by the Indians, commencing from the border of the States to the Willamette. It is much to the praise of our countrymen that they bear so long with the Indians when our Government has done so little to enable them to pass in safety. For one man to lose five or six horses is not a rare occurrence.” Whitman mentioned especially the harassment suffered by the immigrants along the Columbia River: “The timid Indians on the Columbia have this year in open day, attacked several parties of wagons from two to seven, & robbed them, being armed with guns, bows & arrows, knives & axes.” He referred in particular to a “Mr. Glenday from St. Charles, Mo.,... [who] with Mr. Bear his companion, rescued seven wagons from being plundered & the people from gross insult, rescuing one woman when the Indians were in the act of taking all the clothes from her person. The men were mostly striped of their shirts & pantaloons at the time.” The Indians by sudden guerilla attacks would catch the white men unprepared and their assaults were effective even with their primitive weapons. Whitman sent this memorial with his letter of October 18 to Greene with the request that copies be made and sent “to such members of Congress & other influential men as you think will favor the object proposed.”

On the same day that Whitman was writing his memorial, Dr. McLoughlin wrote to the U.S. Secretary of War from Oregon City and gave similar recommendations for the protection of Oregon immigrants. He wrote: “I am convinced that the manner in which the Immigrants travel from Fort Hall to his place will lead to trouble unless the Measures

I suggested to Dr. Whitman when he left here to go home are adopted.” He advised the government to establish a post at Fort Hall, and in this connection, he recommended the appointment of Robert Newell “as a person well qualified for the office of Agent.”⁵⁹

LAST WHITMAN LETTERS

No more convincing proof of the faith that Narcissa and Marcus had in the future of Oregon may be found than that contained in letters that Narcissa wrote to members of her family, especially after her husband’s return from his eastern journey in 1843, urging them to migrate thither. Her eagerness, especially for her younger sister Jane to go to Oregon, was echoed over and over again in her letters to Jane written after 1843. She yearned for Jane’s companionship. In a postscript dated August 23 to a letter begun on July 4, 1847, Narcissa told her mother: “I am expecting to see Jane and Edward this fall; but from those who have already passed, we can hear nothing from them.” Hopefully, Narcissa added: “They may be on the road, for among so many, it is not expected that all will be known to each other.”

Matilda Sager remembered: “Mrs. Whitman’s sister, Jane Prentiss, was coming out to be a teacher. She planned to be out that fall—the fall of 1847. A few weeks before the Indians killed Dr. and Mrs. Whitman and the others, Mrs. Whitman was cleaning the house very thoroughly. I said to her, ‘This isn’t spring, mother—why are we cleaning house now?’ She said, ‘Didn’t you know that we are looking for your Aunt Jane to come out soon?’”⁶⁰

Narcissa began a long letter to her mother on July 4, 1847, to which she added a postscript dated August 23, a part of which may have been written in September. She told of the arrival of the two half-breed sons of Donald Manson, a Hudson’s Bay employee, who were to be educated by the Whitmans. They were John, age thirteen, and Stephen, eleven. She also reported that the P. B. Littlejohns, one of the independent missionary couples who had gone out to Oregon in 1840, had returned to the States. According to Narcissa, Mrs. Littlejohn “was very unwilling to leave the country, but her husband had become such a hypochondriac that there was no living with him in peace. He wanted to kill himself last winter. It is well for him that he has gone to the States, where he can be taken care of... He seems to be very much

like Mr. Munger, the individual we had here that became crazy.”

Narcissa’s last extant letter, dated October 12, was written to Jane, who was then teaching at Quincy, Illinois, and still unmarried. The whole burden of the letter was an appeal for her to come to Oregon. The last paragraph reads: “Jane, there will be no use in your going home to see ma and pa before you come here—it will only make the matters worse with your heart. I want to see her as much as you. If you will all come here, it will not be long before they will be climbing over the Rocky Mountains to see us. The love of parents for their children is very great. I see already in their movements, indications that they will ere long come this way, for father is becoming quite a traveler. Believe me, dear Jane, and come without fail, when you have so good an opportunity.⁶¹ Farewell. N.W.”

Both of the two extant letters that Whitman wrote in the fall of 1847 were sent to the American Board. In his September 13 letter, he wrote: “I have sent to the lower country for a good Mechanic or hired man that wintered with me the year before last.” The reference was to Josiah Osborn, who, with his family, had spent the winter of 1845–46 at Waiilatpu. Whitman called on Osborn when in the Willamette Valley in August 1847 and persuaded him to return to Waiilatpu that fall to rebuild the mills. Whitman agreed to pay him \$300.00 a year if he would stay for a two-year period. This shows that at that time Whitman had no intention of moving away from Waiilatpu. These plans were made before Whitman had learned of the intentions of the Roman Catholics to establish two stations in his vicinity. Osborn had been working for the Methodist Mission but was attracted by Whitman’s offer and agreed to go.⁶² As will be told, he came to regret the move. The Osborns with their four children, the eldest being a girl seven and a half years old, arrived at Waiilatpu on October 18 and were quartered in the Indian room of the main mission building. That was just six weeks before a combination of circumstances exploded in tragedy.

Whitman had had the misfortune to injure a knee in the late fall of 1845 when the horse he was riding fell on him. For a time he had to use crutches. Evidently the injury continued to be a handicap, as Whitman in his letter of September 13 written while at Waskopum, said: “I have not been able to work for the last six months from a weakness in my knee joint... I feel as though I must employ more help & not work myself. I

now intend to devote my whole time & strength to instruct the people. Indeed I ought to itinerate all the time if I would in any good degree meet the Jesuits." Whitman told Greene of his desire to have two schools at Waiilatpu—"One for the children of the Mission, and a boarding school for the natives."

While at The Dalles Whitman had another opportunity to see the passing immigrants and to realize their need for provisions. He wrote: "There are no provisions here more than the Station needs and at my place I have much poorer crops than usual. But we cannot remove ourselves out of the way & must meet the trial the best we can... The first passers never give us any trouble. The weak teams & needy persons come last as also gradually the sick." With a much larger immigration arriving that fall, Whitman realized with apprehension that there would be more calls that year for shelter and care at Waiilatpu than ever before.

Whitman's last letter to Greene, dated October 18, 1847, was written shortly after he had returned from guiding the immigrants, and after he had met Bishop Blanchet and his clergy at Fort Walla Walla. After seeing hundreds of immigrants and scores of wagons streaming westward, Whitman had the subject of Oregon immigration very much on his mind. This was the reason for writing the memorial to Congress which he mailed to Greene with this letter. Again in this letter, as has been previously stated, Whitman stressed the importance of the service he had been able to accomplish in 1843 when he opened the wagon road to the Columbia. "Upon that event," he wrote, "the present acquired rights of U. States by her Citizens hung." Altogether Whitman had witnessed five large Oregon immigrations, including that of 1843. The total number of people involved was about 13,000, some of whom went to California. From about a hundred wagons taken to Oregon in 1843, Whitman saw the number grow annually until there were over a thousand in 1847. Small wonder that he took pride in the role he had played in opening the Oregon country for American settlement.

In this last letter to Greene, Whitman again urged the Board to do something to induce colonies of church people with their ministers to move to Oregon with the hope that they would settle in the interior, seemingly unaware that this would arouse the enmity of the natives. "The Interior of Oregon is unrivalled," he wrote, "probably by any Country for grazing of stock of which sheep are the best. This interior

will now be sought after..." He wanted the very best people to migrate, for this was a work "that needs good men." He argued: "Why will not the best men do good & benefit themselves as readily as worldly minded men? Why will Pastors regret to select their best & worthiest men to do good by their persons & their property & influence? Can a mind be found so narrow as not to be willing to part with a Pastor; or a Pastor not to part with a Church member; simply because they are good men & useful where they are?" Whitman was confident that the interior of Oregon would soon be settled and he wanted Americans instead of "the half breed & French population from the Willamette, as they show a disposition to sell out there & come here."

Here in his last letter to Greene, Whitman returned to his hope of having a college established somewhere in the interior. "I know of no place so eligible as at the Dalls close by our station," he wrote. Whitman never ceased looking into the future and dreaming of things that might be. Although this last letter reveals his continued interests in the political future of Oregon, it also shows his continuing concern for the spiritual welfare of the natives. The last sentence of this last letter to Greene was a plea for a missionary for The Dalles: "I hope the want of a man for Dalls Station will not escape your notice. With Esteem, Yours Truly, Marcus Whitman." No letters from either Marcus or Narcissa remain which might have been written during the last six weeks of their lives. Thus we have no direct evidence of any apprehension they may have felt of the coming tragedy. For the events of those weeks, we must turn to the writings of others.

LAST LETTER FROM GREENE

Greene answered Whitman's letter of October 18, 1847, on the following March 17. It seems evident that some returning traveler to the States had carried Whitman's letter and his memorial to Congress. Greene wrote that he had forwarded the memorial to the Hon. Roger S. Baldwin, U.S. Senator from Connecticut, with the request that it be given consideration. Nothing further is known of the fate of this memorial. Regarding Whitman's plea that the Board do something to induce colonies of Christian people to migrate to Oregon and settle in the interior, Greene wrote: "I must say that I cannot regard it as my duty to make any efforts at all in any form."

Greene was not happy with all the time and energy that Whitman was giving to the immigrants. Surely if Whitman had lived to receive and read the following in Greene's reply, his heart would have been heavy: "We are aware that you must have many secular cares on your hands—much to occupy your mind & time of things which it seems necessary should be done, and [when] no one else seems disposed to do them, you are inclined to undertake them, and spend strength & time about them, which it would be more appropriate & really better for the community around you, for you to spend on efforts aimed more directly at the spiritual welfare of the people. You are known to be a missionary man in your relations and profession, & the people expect you to be mainly occupied in that which is peculiarly missionary work. We doubt the wisdom, taking an enlarged view of the matter, of your spending much time on exploring routes of travel, making roads, etc.... *Do not feel that all Oregon is on your hands, & that the planning, providing & laboring for all its interests are devolved on you.*"⁶³

But the man who was thus being rebuked for an excess of patriotic zeal and social concern was already in his grave when that letter was written.

CROWDED WAILLATPU

Waiilatpu was crowded with seventy-five people, including forty-five children, at the time the massacre began on Monday, November 29, 1847. Of this number, fifty-two had crossed the mountains with the immigration of that year. Regarding them, Narcissa wrote sometime in September: "Poor people—those that are not able to get on, or pay for what they need—are those that will most likely wish to stop here, judging from the past; and connected with this, is a disposition not to work, at any rate, not more than they can help." The Whitmans had learned from previous experience that most of those who sought shelter at Waiilatpu for the winter months were either unable or unwilling to work. Possibly some felt that the missionaries were well subsidized by their mission boards and were, therefore, able to extend free hospitality. Narcissa added in the postscript to her letter: "The poor Indians are amazed at the overwhelming numbers of Americans coming into the country. They seem not to know what to make of it" [Letter 217].

Two of the immigrant families who remained to spend the winter of 1847–48 at Waiilatpu did so because one or more of each family had been employed by Whitman. While Dr. and Mrs. Whitman were on the Umatilla River during the first part of October, they met Judge and Mrs. L. W. Saunders and their five children. The Saunders family belonged to a small company of immigrants which hailed from Oskaloosa, Iowa. They had two wagons, with Isaac Gilliland, a tailor, as the driver of one. Mrs. Saunders in later years wrote her reminiscences of the journey across the country and of her experiences at Waiilatpu during the Whitman massacre and subsequent captivity.⁶⁴ Among her interesting stories is the description of their custom of putting the cream from their milk in a churn which would be hung on the back of a wagon. The jiggling of the wagon as it rolled along the trail resulted in “sweet fresh butter” by the end of the day.

“We passed by what the Indians called the Priest’s House on the Umatilla River,” wrote Mrs. Saunders, “and on the seventh of October we met Dr. Whitman... [who was] looking for a teacher. The Doctor offered such strong inducements that my husband agreed to turn back and go as a teacher to Dr. Whitman’s mission.” Gilliland consented to stay with the family for a few weeks, as Whitman promised him some work as a tailor. They arrived at Waiilatpu on October 12. Since Saunders had had some legal training, Whitman called on him to help write the memorial to Congress which was dated the 16th. Judge Saunders opened his school on the 19th in a room in the long arm of the T-shaped mission building. The schoolroom must have been crowded as there were thirty-two children at the mission between the ages of four and seventeen, although some of these were sick with the measles and were unable to attend.

According to Mrs. Saunders’ reminiscences, Mr. and Mrs. Elam Young and their three grown sons—James, Daniel, and John—arrived at Waiilatpu on the 20th. Whitman succeeded in hiring the four men to work for him at his sawmill and they took up residence in the cabin at the site. A little later, the Joseph Smith family, with five children arrived. They too were sent to the sawmill site, except fifteen-year-old Mary who stayed with the Saunders family in order to attend school. Others who came asking for shelter were Mr. and Mrs. Peter D. Hall and their five children; Mr. and Mrs. Nathan L. Kimball with five children; Walter Marsh, his daughter and grandson; Mrs. Rebecca

Hays, whose husband had died on the trail, and her two little boys;⁶⁵ and a single man, Jacob Hoffman.

Among those who paused briefly at Waiilatpu were Mr. and Mrs. John W. Bewley and their seven children, including a son Crocket, and a daughter, Esther Lorinda, usually called by her second name. Both were in their early twenties. Lorinda noted in her diary that after their arrival at Waiilatpu: "Mrs. Whitman prevailed upon me to stay with her until next spring. She said it was late in the season and as my health was not very good, I consented to stay. My mother thought it would be for the best. My oldest brother Crocket, decided to stay with me."⁶⁶ Lorinda took the place of Mary Johnson, who had worked for the Whitmans during the winter of 1846–47 and who had gone to Lapwai in the summer of 1847 to help Mrs. Spalding. Amos Sales, a young man who had been traveling with the Bewley family, also decided to stay. Also included in the residents at Waiilatpu on the eve of the massacre were two men whom Whitman had hired, Joseph Stanfield,⁶⁷ a French Canadian, and Nicholas Finley, a half-breed from the Spokane country.⁶⁸

On November 7, the W. D. Canfield family, with five children, from Oskaloosa, Iowa, arrived and begged to be received. This was the fifth family, each with five children, to seek accommodations at Waiilatpu that fall. Since every available room had been taken, the Canfields had to camp out until suitable quarters could be arranged for them in the blacksmith shop. Mrs. Osborn was pregnant when she and her husband returned to Waiilatpu in October 1847. Her baby was born on November 14 and died the same day. One of the Osborn girls died of measles two days later. On Monday, November 22, Spalding arrived at Waiilatpu with his daughter, Eliza, who was to attend school. With her coming, all who were destined to be either among the fourteen victims or the forty-six captives in the final tragedy had assembled.

JOE LEWIS, THE CHIEF VILLAIN

In the last company of immigrants to arrive at Waiilatpu in early November was a half-breed by the name of Joe Lewis. According to an anonymous author, who is believed to have been Peter Skene Ogden, Lewis was "a Spanish Creole."⁶⁹ Both Spalding and Catherine Sager claimed that Lewis had been born in Canada and educated in Maine.

Spalding wrote: "He was a good scholar and good mechanic, and had the appearance of an eastern half-breed, spoke the English [language] as his native tongue, and was a devoted Catholic."⁷⁰

Father Brouillet stoutly denied that Lewis was a Catholic and pointed out that there were then "no Catholic churches, no priests, nor any means whatever of receiving Catholic instruction" in Maine.⁷¹

Catherine Sager claimed that Lewis had served with Frémont in the Mexican War and then had drifted to Fort Hall. Captain Grant refused to let Lewis stay at the fort. Lewis then attached himself to a party of emigrants but, according to Catherine, was so "thoroughly disliked" by the time they had arrived at Waiilatpu that they refused to let him continue with them. Mrs. Saunders wrote that Lewis was a Delaware Indian who was "sick and in need of clothing" when he arrived at the Whitman station. She added: "The Doctor clothed him and cared for him until he recovered and sent him away with a family who were going to the Willamette Valey. He returned in three days and refused to leave. It was a case of warming a viper in one's bosom." Joe Lewis moved into the lodge of Nicholas Finley which was located within a few hundred yards of the mission house.

THE ROLL-CALL OF THOSE AT WAILATPU

The following is a list of the residents at the Whitman mission on that fateful Monday, November 29, 1847. The names of the fourteen victims are in italics. The ages of the children and young adults are given in parentheses.

Main Mission House

Total 23

Dr. and Mrs. Marcus Whitman and their family consisting of the seven Sager children—*John* (17), *Francis* (15), *Catherine* (13), *Elizabeth* (10), *Matilda* (8), *Louise* (6), and *Henrietta* (4); five half-breed children—*Mary Ann Bridger* (11), *Helen Mar Meek* (10), *David Malin (Cortez)* (8), *John* (13) and *Stephen* (11) *Manson*; *Eliza Spalding* (10); and *Andrew Rodgers*.

Also, *Mr. and Mrs. Josiah Osborn* and their children—*Nancy A.* (7 1/2), *John L.* (4), and *Alexander* (2); *Crocket Bewley*, and *Lorinda Bewley* (adults).

Emigrant House

Total 31

Judge and Mrs. L. W. Saunders and their children—Helen M. (14), Phoebe (10), Alfred (6), Nancy (4), and Mary A. (2); Mary Smith (15); Mrs. Rebecca Hays and her children—Henry Clay (4), and infant son, Rapolean; Mr. and Mrs. Peter D. Hall and their children—Gertrude (10), Mary C. (8), Ann E. (6), Rebecca (3), and Rachel (1); Mr. and Mrs. Nathan L. Kimball and their children—Susan M. (16), Nathan, Jr. (12), Byron E. (8), Sarah S. (6), and Nina A. (1); *Walter Marsh* and his daughter, Mary E. (11), and grandson, Alba Lyman (2); *Isaac Gilliland*, *Jacob Hoffmann*, and Joseph Stanfield.

Blacksmith Shop

Total 8

Mr. and Mrs. W. D. Canfield and their children—Ellen (16), Oscar (9), Clarissa (7), Sylvia (5), and Albert (3); *Amos Sales*.

Sawmill Cabin

Total 11

Mr. and Mrs. Elam Young and their sons—*James* (24), Daniel (21), and John Q. (19); Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Smith and their children—Edwin (13), Charles (11), Nelson (6), and Mortimer (4).

In an Indian Lodge

Total 2

Half-breeds, Nicholas Finley and Joe Lewis.

Grand Total 75

Not counting themselves, the French Canadian Stanfield and the two half-breeds, the Whitmans found themselves responsible for the welfare of seventy people, of whom sixteen were men, nine were women, and forty-five were children under the age of eighteen. There were nineteen boys and twenty-six girls, including the five half-breed children.⁷² Possibly the two older Smith boys, listed above as being at the sawmill cabin, were actually at Waiilatpu so that they could attend school. In addition to Lorinda Bewley, three of the girls were fifteen or sixteen years old, thus making them eligible to being taken as wives by their captors.

CHAPTER 21 FOOTNOTES

- ¹ Simpson's "Character Book," HBC Arch.
- ² Bancroft, *Oregon*, I:552.
- ³ Walla Walla *Union*, August 12, 1936.
- ⁴ Pringle ms., p. 24, states that Stanfield was in the 1846 immigration.
- ⁵ A rare instance of Mrs. Whitman using Cayuse words in her letters.
- ⁶ Pringle ms., p. 18, where the wording is somewhat different from the author's copy.
- ⁷ Drury, *Spalding*, p. 327.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 326, quoting from a letter from Spalding to A. T. Smith, Feb. 22, 1847.
- ⁹ Hulbert, *O.P.*, VIII:163.
- ¹⁰ Drury, *F.W.W.*, II:315.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 317, fn. 30.
- ¹² This historic press is now in the Oregon Historical Society's museum, Portland.
- ¹³ From postscript dated August 23.
- ¹⁴ Richardson, *Whitman Mission*, p. 149.
- ¹⁵ Kane, *op. cit.*, p. 195.
- ¹⁶ From letter from Harper to me, October 25, 1971.
- ¹⁷ Hines, *Wild Life in Oregon*, p. 166, wrote in a similar manner about Feathercap (Tamsucky): "He has a countenance the most savage."
- ¹⁸ J. Russell Harper (ed.), *Paul Kane's Frontier*, Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth, Texas, 1971, gives a reproduction of a drawing of "Til-au-kite," p. 232. A second drawing by Kane, also labelled as Tiloukaikt, is reproduced as an illustration in this work. The painting in the Royal Ontario Museum was used in Drury, *F.W.W.*, I, p. 168, and *Whitman*, p. 400, with the painting of Tomahas, but in both instances, the identification was erroneously reversed.
- ¹⁹ Harper, *Paul Kane's Frontier*, p. 231 gives picture of a drawing Kane made of "Mrs. Whitman's fan" apparently made out of long feathers.
- ²⁰ See Chapter Seven, section "Their Personal Appearance."
- ²¹ Matilda Sager Delaney to Mrs. Edmund Bowden, March 26, 1928, Coll. W.
- ²² *Op. cit.*, p. 18.
- ²³ *Ibid.*, *passim*.
- ²⁴ From undated clipping, possibly 1905, in Coll. Wn.
- ²⁵ Drury, *Whitman*, p. 25 gives pictures of Whitman's sister, Alice, and his three brothers. Copy in Coll. Wn.
- ²⁶ *Op. cit.*, p. 12.
- ²⁷ Ross Woodbridge was the first to note that the smaller sketch in this Kane drawing could refer to the incident mentioned by Matilda Sager.
- ²⁸ The letter "W" appears on the picture of this sketch used as an illustration in this book. After the picture of the sketch was taken, some accidental cleaning of the sketch removed the letter "W." The first publication of the sketches, without a discussion of their possible authenticity, came in Thompson, *Shallow Grave at*

Waiilatpu, p. 38. Ross Woodbridge was the first to publish an article which dealt with the identification of the sketches. See Whitman College *Alumnus*, February 1970.

- ²⁹ Half-breed sons, ages 13 and 11, of Donald Manson, a Hudson's Bay employee, who had sent his boys to the Whitman mission early in the fall of 1847 to be educated.
- ³⁰ See Drury, *Walker*, frontispiece and p. 203, for reproductions of Stanley's paintings of Elkanah and Abigail Walker.
- ³¹ Kane, *Wanderings of an Artist*, pp. 196-7.
- ³² This practice was sometimes followed by women if the sweat-house were in a secluded place.
- ³³ See Chapter Thirteen, fn. 45, for reference to the four Catholic priests in Old Oregon who had the family name of Blanchet.
- ³⁴ Brouillet, *House Document*, p. 33.
- ³⁵ See Chapter Fifteen, fn. 47, for reference to Young Chief's house.
- ³⁶ See Chapter Fourteen, section "Gray Demands a Station for Himself." Also, Drury, *Spalding and Smith*, pp. 156 and 295.
- ³⁷ Correcting statement in Drury, *Whitman*, pp. 423-4. Father Ricard's Journal appeared in *Les Missions de la Congregation des Missionnaires Oblats de Marie Immaculee*, Vol. 49 (1912), Nos. 197 & 198. Translation furnished by kindness of the late Father W. L. Davis, S.J., Spokane, Wash.
- ³⁸ Because of the Cayuse War which followed the massacre, the work at Saint Rose Mission was abandoned. Many years later a settler, Burwell W. Russell, laid claim to the site. The Catholic Church contested the claim in court but lost; title was granted to Russell on April 10, 1882. Information from U.S. Department of Interior, in a letter to me dated December 30, 1936.
- ³⁹ Hines, *Wild Life in Oregon*, p. 183.
- ⁴⁰ Bishop Blanchet's original "Journal of First Trip to Walla Walla" is in the archdiocesan archives, Roman Catholic Church, Seattle. The translation from the French was made for me through the kindness of the Rev. A. L. Morisette, S.J.
- ⁴¹ See Chapter Seventeen, fn. 16. Josephy, *The Nez Perce Indians*, plate 9, gives a sketch of Peu-peu-mox-mox with the note "Yellow Bird but called Yellow Serpent by the whites."
- ⁴² See Drury, *F.W.W.*, I:218 ff., for a discussion of the Protestant and Catholic ladders and for a picture of Mrs. Spalding's representation. A copy of a Catholic ladder is in *Notices and Voyages of the Famed Quebec Mission*, translated by Carl Landerholm, Oregon Historical Society, 1956, p. 44.
- ⁴³ Ricard, Journal, No. 197:78.
- ⁴⁴ Brouillet, *House Document*, p. 44. Italics in the original.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 22.
- ⁴⁶ From record of "Baptisms, Marriages," St. James Cathedral, Vancouver, Wash., for 1842-56.
- ⁴⁷ Brouillet, *House Document*, p. 33.
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 34.
- ⁴⁹ Italics in the original account by Blanchet. See ante, fn. 40.
- ⁵⁰ Brouillet, *House Document*, pp. 33-4.

- ⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 53.
- ⁵² See Chapter Sixteen, "To Counteract the Roman Catholics."
- ⁵³ In this letter Whitman called all the Catholic missionaries in the Blanchet party "Jesuits." This, of course, was not the case. Spalding, Gray, and other Protestants were too ill-informed on the Catholic orders to be accurate.
- ⁵⁴ HBC Arch., B/223/b/33. Douglas & Grant to Governor & Committee from Fort Vancouver, in a letter dated Sept. 20, 1847, quoting Grant.
- ⁵⁵ Bancroft, *Oregon*, I:645.
- ⁵⁶ Reminiscences of Elizabeth Ann Coonc in *Walla Walla Union*, August 12, 1936. Her account was written before 1900.
- ⁵⁷ Hulbert, *O.P.*, VIII:237 ff., gives the full text of the memorial.
- ⁵⁸ See Chapter Eighteen, "Synopsis of Whitman's Bill."
- ⁵⁹ Original McLoughlin letter in Old Indian Bureau files, National Archives.
- ⁶⁰ Lockley, *Oregon Trail Blazers*, p. 332.
- ⁶¹ Narcissa's letter to her sister was carried to the States by a Mr. Glenday, who was planning to return to Oregon the following year with a party. Narcissa wanted Jane to travel with this group.
- ⁶² From Osborn letter, April 7, 1848, Coll. W.
- ⁶³ Hulbert, *O.P.*, VIII:251 ff. Italics are the author's.
- ⁶⁴ Only one copy of this excellent pamphlet by Mrs. Mary Saunders, *The Whitman Massacre*, Oakland, Calif., 1916, is known to be extant. This is in the Library of Congress. A typewritten copy is in Coll. B., from which a xerox copy was made for me. Pagination used in footnotes of this book is to this copy and not to her published pamphlet.
- ⁶⁵ Pringle ms., pp. 24 & 39 mentions two sons of Mrs. Hays, a fact usually overlooked in the various listings of those at Waiilatpu at the time of the massacre. In the Pringle scrapbooks, Coll. W., Catherine named the boys, John and Rapolean (possibly Napoleon). Pringle ms., p. 39 mentions death of the Hays baby.
- ⁶⁶ Pringle ms., author's copy, contains a postscript giving quotations from Lorinda Bewley's diary from which this quotation is taken.
- ⁶⁷ See ante, fn. 4, of this chapter.
- ⁶⁸ A son of Jacques (Jacko) Finley (or Finlay) who helped build Spokane House in 1810. Two of the brothers of Nicholas lived in the vicinity of Tshimakain and figure in the story of Walker and Eells.
- ⁶⁹ *Traits of American Life*, by a Fur Trader (Peter Skene Ogden?), San Francisco, 1933, p. 54.
- ⁷⁰ Spalding, *Senate Document*, p. 28.
- ⁷¹ Brouillet, *House Document*, p. 56.
- ⁷² For list of residents at Waiilatpu at the time of the massacre, see Spalding, *Senate Document*, p. 27; Cannon, *Waiilatpu*, pp. 106-7; Bancroft, *Oregon*, I:647-8; Eells, *Marcus Whitman*, pp. 287-8; Pringle ms., p. 24. The lists vary in several particulars.